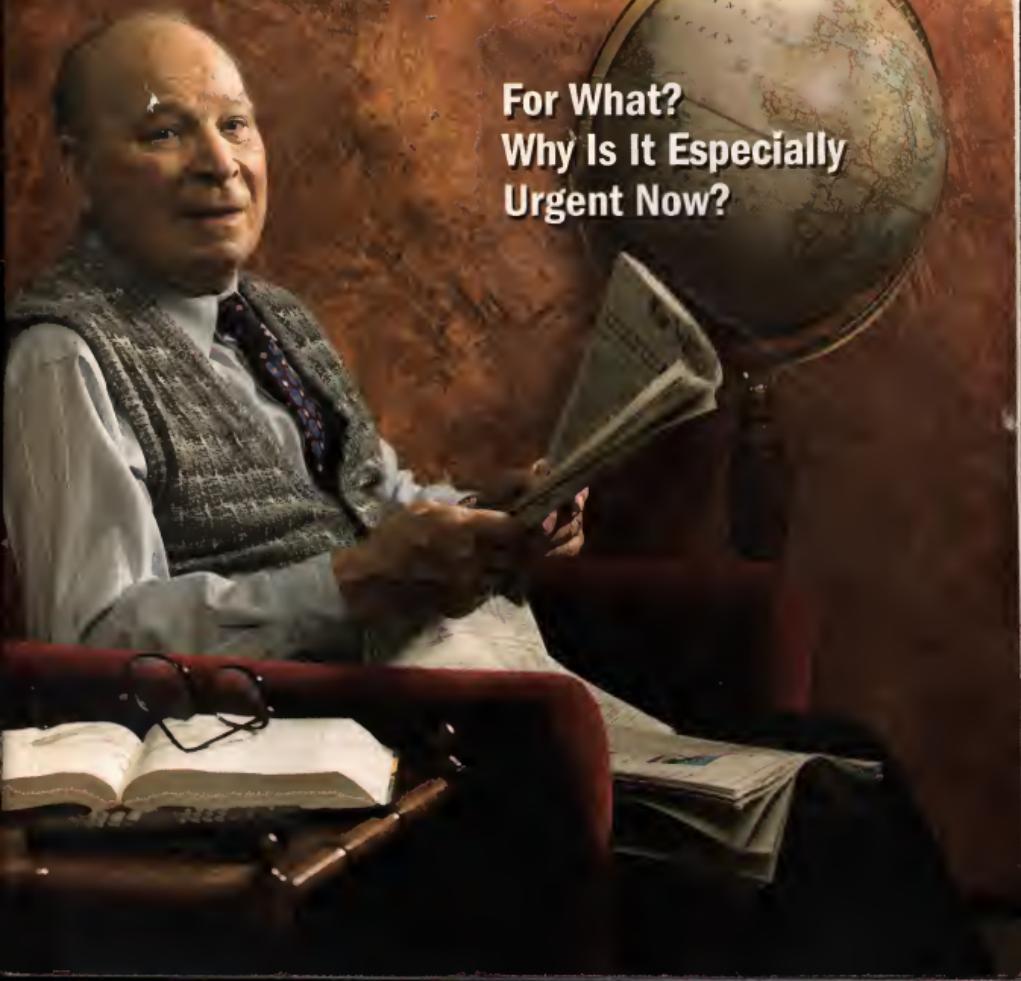


KEEP ON THE WATCH!

**For What?
Why Is It Especially
Urgent Now?**





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Keep on the Watch!

English (Ap-E)

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WHERE IS THIS WORLD HEADING?

Serious problems and shocking events have become everyday news around the world!
What does it mean?

PERSONAL SECURITY: Bombs set off in market-places. Teachers and students shot in school. Infants snatched away when parents turned their backs. Women and elderly men mugged in broad daylight.



THE RELIGIOUS SCENE: Churches back factions in war. Clergy charged in genocide. Priests sexually exploit young people; church cover-up. Decline in attendance; church buildings sold.



THE ENVIRONMENT: Forests stripped for commercial ventures. Woodlands laid bare by the poor in search of fuel. Groundwater polluted, unsafe to drink. Fishing ruined by industrial waste and some modern methods. Air choked with pollution.





EARNING A LIVING: Per capita income for sub-Saharan Africa reported to be about \$480 (U.S.) a year. Corporate greed leads to business collapse, leaving thousands without work. Fraud causes investors to lose life savings.

FOOD SHORTAGES: Some 800,000,000 people worldwide regularly go to bed hungry.



WAR: Over 100,000,000 people lost their lives as a result of war in the 20th century. Enough nuclear weapons on hand to destroy all mankind many times. Civil wars. Terrorism reaches out to engulf the globe.



PESTILENCE AND OTHER ILLNESS: Starting in 1918, the Spanish flu killed 21,000,000 people. AIDS has now become "the most devastating pandemic in human history." Cancer and heart disease bring grief worldwide.



Look beyond the single news items. Are they isolated events? Or are they part of a global pattern that has real significance?



Does God Really Care?

Distressed by shocking events or by severe personal loss, many people wonder why God does not intervene to prevent such things.

God does care. He provides sound guidance and genuine relief now. (Matthew 11:28-30; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17) He has laid the basis for permanently putting an end to violence, sickness, and death. His provisions show that he cares not merely for people of one nation but for people of all nations, tribes, and tongues.—Acts 10: 34, 35.

How much do we care? Do you know who the Creator of heaven and earth is? What is his name? What is his purpose? He answers these questions in the Bible. There he tells us what steps he is taking to put an end to violence as well as sickness and death. In order to benefit, what is required on our part? We need to learn about him and his purpose. How can we expect to benefit from his provisions unless we show faith in him? (John 3:16; Hebrews 11:6) It is also necessary to obey his requirements. (1 John 5:3) Do you care enough to do that?

To comprehend why present conditions are permitted by God, we must understand a vital issue. The Bible explains it. On page 15 of this publication, this issue is identified.

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

JESUS CHRIST said: "*The conclusion of the system of things*" would be identified by war, food shortages, pestilence, and earthquakes.—Matthew 24:1-8; Luke 21:10, 11.

Since 1914 life has been marred by wars between nations and between ethnic groups, often as a result of political interference by clergymen and now by widespread terrorist attacks.

In spite of scientific developments, extreme food shortages are the lot of hundreds of millions of people earth wide. Each year millions of people die because of shortage of food.

Pestilence, that is, widespread epidemics of infectious disease, is also part of the sign given by Jesus. Following World War I, an epidemic of influenza claimed over 21,000,000 lives. Unlike fairly local-

ized plagues in ages past, it touched nations earth wide as well as remote islands. AIDS is now sweeping the globe, and such plagues as TB, malaria, river blindness, and Chagas' disease persist in developing nations.

Reportedly, there are tens of thousands of earthquakes of varying intensity every year. Regardless of available equipment and improved reporting methods, disasters in population centers as a result of earthquakes have become frequent news.

The Bible also foretold: "Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away."—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Do you not agree that we are living in "critical times hard to deal with"?

Have you observed that people, to an excessive extent, are lovers of self, lovers of money, and driven by pride?

Who would dispute that the world is filled with people who are demanding but unthankful, not open to agreement, disloyal?

Are you aware that disobedience to parents along with a shocking lack of affection has dramatically increased, not only in a few places but around the globe?

The Last Days of What?

Not the last days of humankind. For those who do the will of God, the Bible holds out the prospect of living forever.—John 3:16, 36; 1 John 2:17.

Not the last days of the earth. God's Word promises that the inhabited earth will endure forever.—Psalm 37:29; 104:5; Isaiah 45:18.

Instead, these are the last days of this violent, loveless system of things and those who cling to its ways.—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

No doubt you realize that we live in a world that is intoxicated with love of pleasure but is lacking in love of goodness. That is how the Bible describes attitudes that would prevail in "the last days."

Is more needed in order to identify the time in which we live? Jesus also foretold that during this same time, the good news of God's Kingdom would be preached in all the inhabited earth. (Matthew 24:14) Is that being done?

The Watchtower, a Bible-based journal that is devoted to announcing the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom, is regularly printed in more languages than any other periodical.

Every year, Jehovah's Witnesses devote more than a billion hours to witnessing personally to others about God's Kingdom.



*Global preaching
of the good news*

Is the Bible Really God's Word?

Repeatedly, the Bible prophets wrote: "This is what Jehovah has said." (Isaiah 43:14; Jeremiah 2:2) Even Jesus Christ, the Son of God, emphasized that he 'did not speak of his own originality.' (John 14:10) The Bible itself clearly says: "All Scripture is inspired of God."—2 Timothy 3:16.

No other book is published in as many languages—over 2,200, as reported by the United Bible Societies. No other book has such a large circulation—now more than four *billion* copies. Is that not what you would expect of a message from God that is for all mankind?

For a fuller discussion of the evidences that the Bible is inspired of God, see the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

If you read the Bible with appreciation for the fact that it truly is God's Word, you will greatly benefit.



Literature explaining the Bible is currently published by them in some 400 languages, even languages that reach remote and small population groups. Jehovah's Witnesses have reached all nations with the good news; they have also preached in many islands and territories that are too small to be significant in the political world. In most lands, they carry on a regular program of Bible education.

Indeed, the good news of God's King-

dom is being preached in all the inhabited earth, not to convert the world, but to give a witness. People everywhere are being given an opportunity to show whether they care who created the heavens and the earth and whether they will show respect for his laws and demonstrate love for their fellowman.—Luke 10:25-27; Revelation 4:11.

Soon now, God's Kingdom will cleanse the earth of all the wicked and make it a global paradise.—Luke 23:43.

What Is God's Kingdom?

**It is the government in heaven that expresses rulership by the true God, Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth.
—Jeremiah 10:10, 12.**

The Bible identifies Jesus Christ as the one to whom God gives such ruling authority. (Revelation 11:15) When on earth, Jesus demonstrated that he already had amazing authority from God—authority that enabled him to control the natural elements, to cure all sorts of illnesses,

and even to raise the dead. (Matthew 9: 2-8; Mark 4:37-41; John 11:11-44) Inspired Bible prophecy foretold that God would also give him "rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him." (Daniel 7:13, 14) That government is called the Kingdom of heaven; it is from heaven that Jesus Christ now exercises his rulership.



WHERE IS YOUR LIFE HEADING?

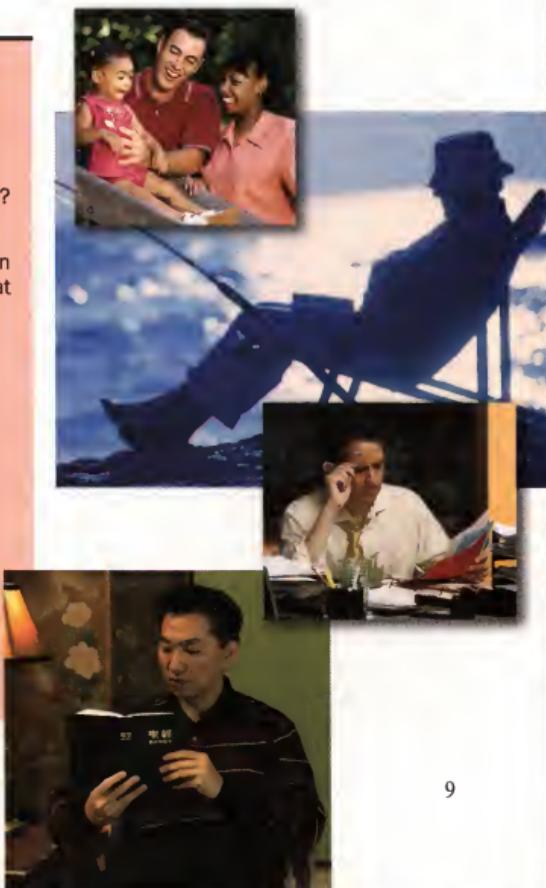
- Many people are so wrapped up in the affairs of daily life that they give little thought to where they are heading.
- The Bible alerts us to wonderful events ahead. It also warns of a coming global upheaval in human institutions. For us to benefit and to avoid calamity, positive action is urgent.
- There are some people who know what the Bible says and try to apply it but who let the anxieties of life push them off course.
- Are you happy with the direction that your life is taking? When you plan activities, do you consider how these could affect your long-term goals in life?

What Is Most Important to You?

How would you rate the following?
Number them.

Many of them have a proper place in life, but when you have to choose, what comes first? second? and so forth.

- Entertainment/recreation
- My job or my career
- My health
- Personal happiness
- My mate
- My parents
- My children
- A nice home, fine clothes
- Being the best at whatever I do
- Worship of God



Are Your Choices Leading You to Where You Really Want to Go?

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION: Does my choice of recreation refresh me? Does it involve thrills that could endanger my health or even cripple me for life? Is it a form of "fun" that involves excitement for perhaps a few hours but that can bring long-term heartache? Even if the entertainment that I choose is wholesome, am I spending so much time at it that it crowds out more important things?

MY JOB OR MY CAREER: Does it serve as a means of support, or am I really a slave to it? Does it make demands that are ruining my health? Would I prefer to work overtime on my job or to spend time with my mate or my children? If my employer demands work that disturbs my conscience or that frequently crowds out spiritual interests, will I do that work in order to keep my job?

MY HEALTH: Do I take it for granted, or am I consistent about safeguarding it? Does it dominate my conversation? Does the way I treat it show concern for my family?

PERSONAL HAPPINESS: Is this my first consideration? Do I put it ahead of the happiness of my mate or my family? Is the way in which I seek it consistent with being a worshiper of the true God?

MY MATE: Do I view my mate as my companion simply when this happens to suit me? Do I treat my mate with honor, as one who is entitled to personal dignity? Does belief in God influence the way I view my mate?

MY PARENTS: If still a minor, am I obedient to my parents—answering respectfully, doing assigned chores, coming home at whatever time they set, avoiding associations and activities that they warn against? If an adult, do I listen to my parents with respect, giving them suitable help when this is needed? Is the way I deal with them governed by my convenience or by the counsel of God's Word?

MY CHILDREN: Do I feel a responsibility to teach my children proper moral values, or do I expect the schools to do that? Do I spend time with my children, or do I expect toys, TV, or a computer to keep them occupied? Do I discipline my children consistently when they ignore God's reminders, or do I do it mainly when I am irritated?

A NICE HOME, FINE CLOTHES: What dictates the attention I give to my appearance and my possessions—the impression I hope to make on the neighbors? the welfare of my family? the fact that I am a worshiper of God?

BEING THE BEST AT WHATEVER I DO: Do I feel that it is important to do things well? Do I strive to be the best? Am I disturbed if someone else does something better?

WORSHIP OF GOD: Is having the approval of God more important to me than the approval of my mate, my children, my parents, or my employer? In order to maintain a comfortable life-style, would I be willing to push service to God into second place?

CONSIDER CAREFULLY THE BIBLE'S COUNSEL

What place does God occupy in your life?

Ecclesiastes 12:13: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man."

ASK YOURSELF: Does my life show that I view things that way? Does obedience to God's commandments determine how I care for responsibilities at home, at work, or at school? Or do other interests or the pressures of life determine whether I set aside time for God?

What sort of relationship with God do you have?

Proverbs 3:5, 6: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight."

Matthew 4:10: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service."

ASK YOURSELF: Is that the way I feel about God? Do my everyday activities, as well as the way that I deal with crises, demonstrate such trust and devotion?

How important to you are reading and studying the Bible?

John 17:3: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."

ASK YOURSELF: Does the place that I give to reading God's Word and thinking deeply on it show that I really believe that?

How important to you is attendance at meetings of the Christian congregation?

Hebrews 10:24, 25: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, ... and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near."

Psalm 122:1: "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: To the house of Jehovah let us go."

ASK YOURSELF: Does my pattern of life show appreciation for this direction found in God's Word? During the past month, did I skip any Christian meetings because I let something else crowd them out?

Do you have a zealous share in talking to others about God and his purpose?

Matthew 24:14: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness . . . , and then the end will come."

Matthew 28:19, 20: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."

Psalm 96:2: "Sing to Jehovah, bless his name. From day to day tell the good news of salvation by him."

ASK YOURSELF: Does this activity really have the place in my life that it deserves? Does my share in it reflect conviction on my part as to the seriousness of the times in which we live?

'THE HOUR OF JUDGMENT' HAS ARRIVED

REVELATION, the last book of the Bible, alerts us to the fact that an angel flying in midheaven has "everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings." He says in a loud voice: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived." (Revelation 14:6, 7) That 'hour of judgment' includes both the pronouncement and the execution of divine judgment. An "hour" is a relatively short period of time. It comes as the climax of "the last days." We live in that time now.—2 Timothy 3:1.

The arrival of 'the hour of judgment' is good news to lovers of righteousness. It is a time when God will bring relief to his servants, who have suffered at the hands of this violent, loveless system of things.

Now, before 'the hour of judgment' concludes with the destruction of the present wicked system of things, we are urged: "Fear God and give him glory." Are you doing that? This involves far more than saying, "I believe in God." (Matthew 7:21-23; James 2:19, 20) Proper fear of God should make us stand in awe of him. It should cause us to turn away from badness. (Proverbs 8:13) It should help us to *love* what is good and *hate* what is bad. (Amos 5:14, 15) If we honor God, we will listen to him with great respect. We will not be too busy with other things to read his Word, the Bible, regularly. We will trust in him at all times and with our whole heart. (Psalm 62:8; Proverbs 3:5, 6) Those who truly honor him recognize that as the Creator of heaven and earth, he is the Universal Sovereign, and they lovingly submit to him as the Sovereign of their lives. If we realize that we ought to give

more attention to these matters, let us do so without delay.

The time of the execution of judgment of which the angel spoke is also known as "the day of Jehovah." Such a "day" came upon ancient Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. because its inhabitants did not heed Jehovah's warnings through his prophets. By postponing Jehovah's day in their own minds, they further endangered their lives. Jehovah had warned them: "It is near, and there is a hurrying of it very much." (Zephaniah 1:14) Another "day of Jehovah" came upon ancient Babylon in 539 B.C.E. (Isaiah 13:1, 6) Confident in their fortifications and in their gods, the Babylonians ignored the warnings given by Jehovah's prophets. But in one night, great Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians.

What confronts us today? Another and more far-reaching "day of Jehovah." (2 Peter 3:11-14) Divine judgment has been pronounced upon "Babylon the Great." According to Revelation 14:8, an angel declares: "Babylon the Great has fallen." That has already taken place. No longer can she restrain worshipers of Jehovah. Her own corruption and involvement in war have been widely exposed. Now her final destruction is near. For that reason, the Bible urges people everywhere: "Get out of her [Babylon the Great] . . . if you do not want to share with her in her sins, and if you do not want to receive part of her plagues. For her sins have massed together clear up to heaven, and God has called her acts of injustice to mind."—Revelation 18:4, 5.

What is Babylon the Great? It is the global system of religion that bears the ear-



marks of ancient Babylon. (Revelation, chapters 17, 18) Consider some of the similarities:

- The priests of ancient Babylon were deeply involved in the nation's political affairs. That is true of much religion today.
- Babylon's priests often promoted the nation's warfare. Modern-day religion has often been in the forefront of those blessing soldiers as the nations have gone to war.
- The teachings and practices of ancient Babylon led the nation into gross immorality. When religious leaders today push the Bible's standard of morality aside, immorality is rampant among both clergy and laity. Noteworthy also is the fact that because Babylon the Great prostitutes herself to the world and its political systems, Revelation depicts her as a harlot.
- The Bible also says that Babylon the Great lives "in shameless luxury." In ancient Babylon, the temple organization acquired extensive landholdings, and the priests became prominent in commercial activities. Today, in addition to places of worship, Babylon the Great has vast commercial holdings. Her teachings and her holidays bring great riches both to her and to others in the business world.
- Use of images, magic, and sorcery were common in ancient Babylon, as they are in

many places today. Death was viewed as a passage to another kind of life. Babylon was filled with temples and chapels in honor of its gods, but the Babylonians opposed worshipers of Jehovah. The same beliefs and practices identify Babylon the Great.

In ancient times, Jehovah maneuvered powerful political and military nations to punish those who showed persistent disregard for him and his will. Thus Samaria was destroyed by the Assyrians in 740 B.C.E. Jerusalem was devastated by the Babylonians in 607 B.C.E. and by the Romans in 70 C.E. Babylon, in turn, was conquered by the Medes and the Persians in 539 B.C.E. For our day, the Bible forecasts that political governments, like a wild beast, will turn on "the harlot" and strip her naked, exposing her real character. They will completely destroy her.—Revelation 17:16.

Will the world's governments really do such a thing? The Bible states that 'God will put it into their hearts.' (Revelation 17:17) It will be sudden, surprising, shocking, not foreseeable or gradual.

What action do you need to take? Ask yourself: 'Do I still cling to a religious organization that is tainted with teachings and practices that mark it as part of Babylon the Great?' Even if you are not a member, you might ask yourself: 'Have I allowed its spirit to influence me?' What sort of spirit? A spirit of toleration of loose morals, love of material possessions and pleasures rather than love for God, or willful disregard (even in seemingly small things) for the Word of Jehovah. Think carefully about your reply.

For us to have Jehovah's favor, it is vital that both in our actions and in the desires of our heart, we give evidence that we truly are no part of Babylon the Great. There is no time for delay. Alerting us that the end will come suddenly, the Bible says: "With a swift pitch will Babylon the great city be

When Will the End Come?

"At an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming."—Matthew 24:44.

"Keep on the watch . . . because you know neither the day nor the hour."—Matthew 25:13.

"It will not be late."—Habakkuk 2:3.

hurled down, and she will never be found again."—Revelation 18:21.

But there is more. In another aspect of that 'hour of judgment,' Jehovah God will call to account the global political system, its rulers, and all who ignore his rightful rulership by means of his heavenly Kingdom

in the hands of Jesus Christ. (Revelation 13:1, 2; 19:19-21) The prophetic vision recorded at Daniel 2:20-45 depicts political rulership from the time of ancient Babylon to the present as a giant image made of gold, silver, copper, iron, and clay. Regarding our day, the prophecy foretold: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin." And concerning what that Kingdom will yet do during Jehovah's 'hour of judgment,' the Bible declares: "It will crush and put an end to all these [man-made] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—Daniel 2:44.

The Bible warns true worshipers against loving "the things in the world"—the way of life promoted by this world that is alienated from the true God. (1 John 2:15-17) Do your decisions and actions show that you are uncompromisingly for the Kingdom of God? Do you truly put it first in your life? —Matthew 6:33; John 17:16, 17.

Would It Make a Difference if You Knew?

If you knew for sure that the impending execution of divine judgment would not come for a few more years, would that change how you are using your life? If the end of this old system is already later than you expected, have you allowed this to slow you down in Jehovah's service?—Hebrews 10:36-38.

Our not knowing the exact time gives us opportunity to show that we serve God out of pure motives. Those who know Jehovah realize that a last-minute display of zeal will not impress God, who sees what the heart is.—Jeremiah 17:10; Hebrews 4:13.

For those who truly love Jehovah, he al-

ways comes first. Like other people, true Christians may do secular work. However, their goal is, not to get rich, but to have sufficient material goods and a little to share. (Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:7-12) They also enjoy wholesome recreation and a change of pace, but their desire is to be refreshed, not simply to do what everyone else is doing. (Mark 6:31; Romans 12:2) Like Jesus Christ, they delight in doing God's will.—Psalm 37:4; 40:8.

True Christians want to live and serve Jehovah forever. That prospect is not less precious because they must wait for certain blessings a little longer than some may have expected.



The Issue of Sovereignty

To understand why God permits so much suffering, we need to understand the issue of sovereignty. What is sovereignty? It is supremacy of authority.

Because Jehovah is the Creator, he has the right to rule over the earth and all who dwell on it. However, the Bible explains that early in human history, Jehovah's sovereignty was challenged. Satan the Devil claimed that Jehovah was unduly restrictive, that He had lied to our first parents about what would happen if they ignored God's law and did things their own way, and that it really would be better if they governed themselves apart from God.—Genesis, chapters 2, 3.

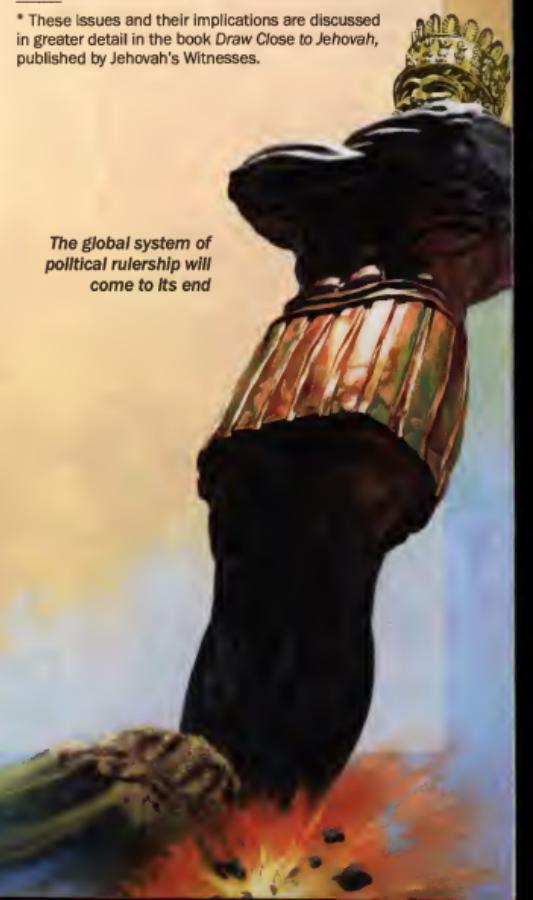
If God had destroyed the rebels right away, that would have demonstrated his power, but it would not have settled the issues raised. Instead of destroying the rebels on the spot, Jehovah has allowed all intelligent creation to see the outcome of rebellion. Though this has involved suffering, it has also afforded opportunity for us to be born.

Furthermore, at great cost to himself, Jehovah lovingly made provision that humans who would obey him and exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of his Son could be freed from sin and its consequences and live in Paradise. If necessary, this could be by means of a resurrection from the dead.

Allowing time for settling the issue has also given God's servants opportunity to demon-

strate that they are capable of responding to God's love and proving their integrity to Jehovah under all circumstances. The settling of the issue of divine sovereignty, along with the related issue of human integrity, is vital in order for there to be proper respect for law in the universe. Without that, true peace would never be possible.*

* These issues and their implications are discussed in greater detail in the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



The global system of political rulership will come to its end

A NEW WORLD ACCORDING TO GOD'S PROMISE

THE Bible, the written Word of God, fills us with hope when it says: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

What is the "new heavens"? The Bible associates heaven with rulership. (Acts 7:49) The "new heavens" is a new government that will rule over the earth. It is new because it will replace the present system of rulership; it is also a new development in the outworking of God's purpose. It is the Kingdom for which Jesus taught us to pray. (Matthew 6:10) Since God is its Source and he dwells in heaven, it is called "the kingdom of the heavens."—Matthew 7:21.

What is the "new earth"? It is not a new globe, since the Bible clearly states that the earth will be inhabited forever. The "new earth" is a new human society. It will be

new because the wicked will have been cut off. (Proverbs 2:21, 22) All who then live will honor and obey the Creator and will live in harmony with his requirements. (Psalm 22:27) People of all nations are being invited to learn those requirements and to bring their lives into harmony with them now. Are you doing that?

In God's new world, everyone will respect His rulership. Does love for God move you to obey him? (1 John 5:3) Is that evident in your home? at work or at school? in the way that you are using your life?

In that new world, human society will be united in worship of the true God. Do you worship the Creator of heaven and earth? Does your worship truly unite you with fellow worshipers of all nations, all races, all languages?—Psalm 86:9, 10; Isaiah 2:2-4; Zephaniah 3:9.



The God Who Promises These Things

He is the Creator of the physical heavens and of planet Earth. He is the one whom Jesus Christ identified as "the only true God." —John 17:3.

The majority of mankind honor gods of their own making. Millions bow before lifeless images. Others glorify human institutions, materialistic philosophies, or their own desires. Even those who claim to use the Bible do not all honor the name of the one it identifies as "the true God." —Deuteronomy 4:35.

Concerning himself, the Creator says: "I am Jehovah. That is my name." (Isaiah 42:5, 8) This name appears some 7,000 times in the Bible in its original languages. Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified."

—Matthew 6:9.

What sort of person is the true God? He describes himself as one who is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth" and as one who by no means grants exemption from punishment to those who willfully violate his commandments. (Exodus 34:6, 7) The history of his dealings with humankind confirms the truthfulness of that description.

Both the name and the person represented by that name are to be sanctified, or treated as holy. As the Creator and Universal Sovereign, he is entitled to our obedience and all our worship. Do you personally give these to him?



What Changes Will “New Heavens and a New Earth” Bring?

Earth transformed into Paradise

Luke 23:43

A global society in which people of all nations, all races, all languages are united in love

John 13:35; Revelation 7:9, 10

Global peace, true security for all

Psalm 37:10, 11; Micah 4:3, 4

Satisfying work, plenty of food

Isaiah 25:6; 65:17, 21-23

Sickness, sorrow, death eliminated

Isaiah 25:8; Revelation 21:1, 4

A world united in worship of the true God

Revelation 15:3, 4



Will You Benefit?

God cannot lie!—Titus 1:2.

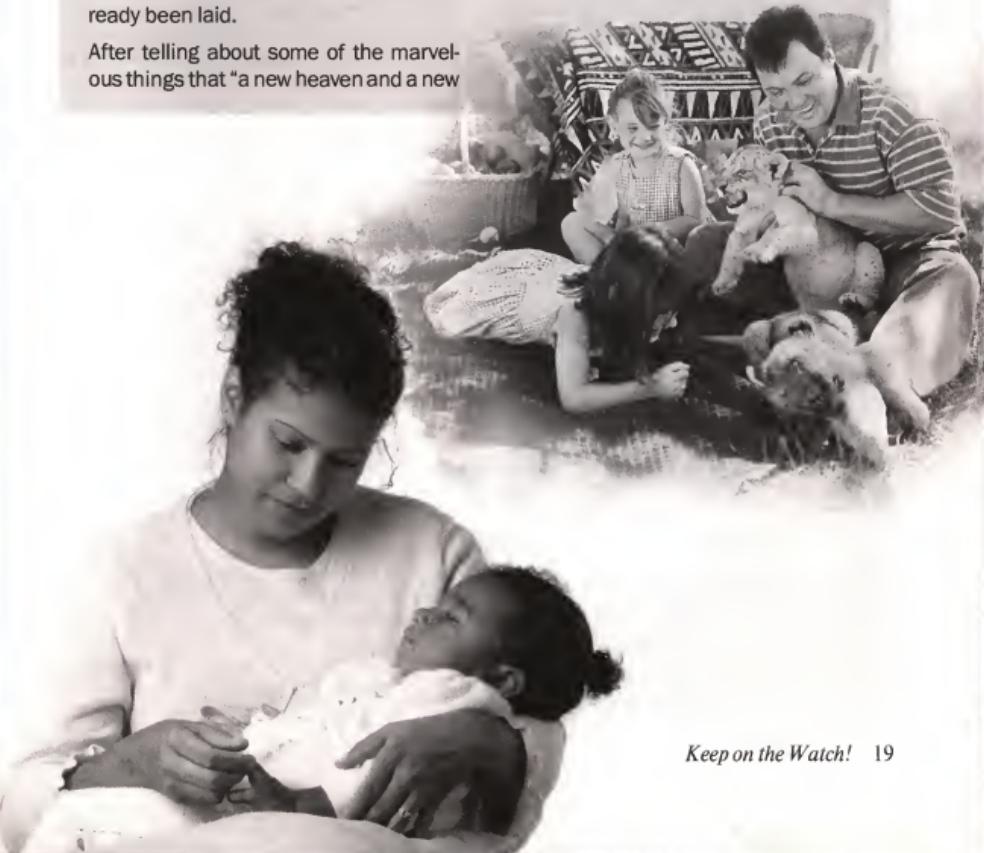
Jehovah declares: "My word . . . will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:11.

Jehovah is already creating "new heavens and a new earth." The heavenly government is already in operation. The foundation for the "new earth" has already been laid.

After telling about some of the marvelous things that "a new heaven and a new

earth" will bring to humankind, Revelation quotes God himself, the Universal Sovereign, as saying: "Look! I am making all things new." Also, he says: "Write, because these words are faithful and true."—Revelation 21:1, 5.

The crucial question is, Are we making the needed adjustments in order to be counted worthy to be a part of that "new earth" under the "new heavens"?



PAYING ATTENTION SAVED THEIR LIVES

JESUS CHRIST gave advance warning of the end of the Jewish system of things that was centered at the temple in Jerusalem. He did not give a date when it would occur. But he described events that would lead up to that destruction. He urged his disciples to keep on the watch and to get out of the danger zone.

Jesus foretold: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near." He also said: "When you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation . . . standing in a holy place, . . . then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains." Jesus urged his disciples not to go

back to save material possessions. Flight was urgent if their lives were to be saved.
—Luke 21:20, 21; Matthew 24:15, 16.

In order to put down prolonged revolt, Cestius Gallus led Roman forces against Jerusalem in 66 C.E. He even entered the city and laid siege to the temple. Turmoil engulfed the city. Those who kept on the watch could see that disaster was imminent. But was flight possible? Unexpectedly, Cestius Gallus withdrew his troops. Jewish insurgents pursued them. Now was the time to flee from Jerusalem and all Judea!

The next year, Roman troops returned under Vespasian and his son Titus. The whole country was engulfed in war. Early in 70 C.E., the Romans built around Jerusalem a fortification of pointed stakes. All escape was blocked off. (Luke 19:43, 44) Factions within the city slaughtered one another. The remainder of the people were either killed by the Romans or taken into captivity. The city and its temple were completely destroyed. According to first-century Jewish historian Josephus, more than a million Jews suffered and died. That temple has never been rebuilt.

If the Christians had still been in Jerusalem in 70 C.E., they would have been



Paying attention to the warning saved the lives of many when Mount Pinatubo spewed out volcanic ash



*The lives of Christians
who heeded Jesus' warning
were spared when Jerusalem
was destroyed in 70 C.E.*

killed or enslaved along with everyone else there. However, ancient historians report that the Christians had heeded divine warning and fled from both Jerusalem and all Judea to the mountains east of the Jordan River. Some settled in Pella, in the province of Perea. They had abandoned Judea and had not returned. Paying heed to Jesus' warning had saved their lives.

Do You Take Seriously Warnings From Reputable Sources?

After hearing about numerous warnings that have not materialized, many people treat all warnings lightly. However, heeding warnings may save your life.

In China in 1975, warnings were given that an earthquake would strike. Officials took action. The people responded. Many thousands of lives were saved.

In April 1991 in the Philippines, villagers on the slopes of Mount Pinatubo reported that steam and ash were spouting from the

mountain. After monitoring the situation for two months, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology warned of imminent danger. Promptly, tens of thousands of people were evacuated from the area. Early on June 15, with a mighty explosion, more than two cubic miles of pulverized material was hurled toward the heavens and then settled over the countryside. Paying attention saved thousands of lives.

The Bible warns of the end of the present system of things. We now live in the last days. As the end nears, are you keeping on the watch? Are you taking action so as to stay out of the danger zone? With a sense of urgency, are you warning others to do the same?

"THEY TOOK NO NOTE"

LIGHTLY brushing aside warnings can result in disaster.

Darwin, Australia, was in the midst of preparations for holiday festivities in 1974 when sirens warned of an approaching cyclone. But Darwin had not been damaged by a cyclone in some 30 years. Why now? Most of the residents did not view the danger as truly serious until savage winds began to rip off roofs and peel away walls of the houses in which people huddled. By the next morning, the city was a desolate waste.

In Colombia in November 1985, a volcano erupted. Melting snow and ice unleashed a mudflow that entombed more than 20,000 of the inhabitants of the town of Armero. Was there no advance warning? The mountain had trembled for months. However, accustomed to living alongside a volcano, most people in Armero were unconcerned. Officials received warning that disaster would soon strike, but they did little to warn the public. Radio announcements were made in an effort to reassure the

populace. The public-address system at the church was used to urge people to remain calm. During the evening, there were two spectacular explosions. Would you have abandoned your possessions and fled? Few people made any effort to do so until it was too late.

Often geologists predict with considerable accuracy where earthquakes will occur. But they can seldom predict exactly when they will strike. In 1999, earthquakes around the world claimed some 20,000 lives. Many of those who died had thought that it would never happen to them.

How Do You React to Warnings That Come From God Himself?

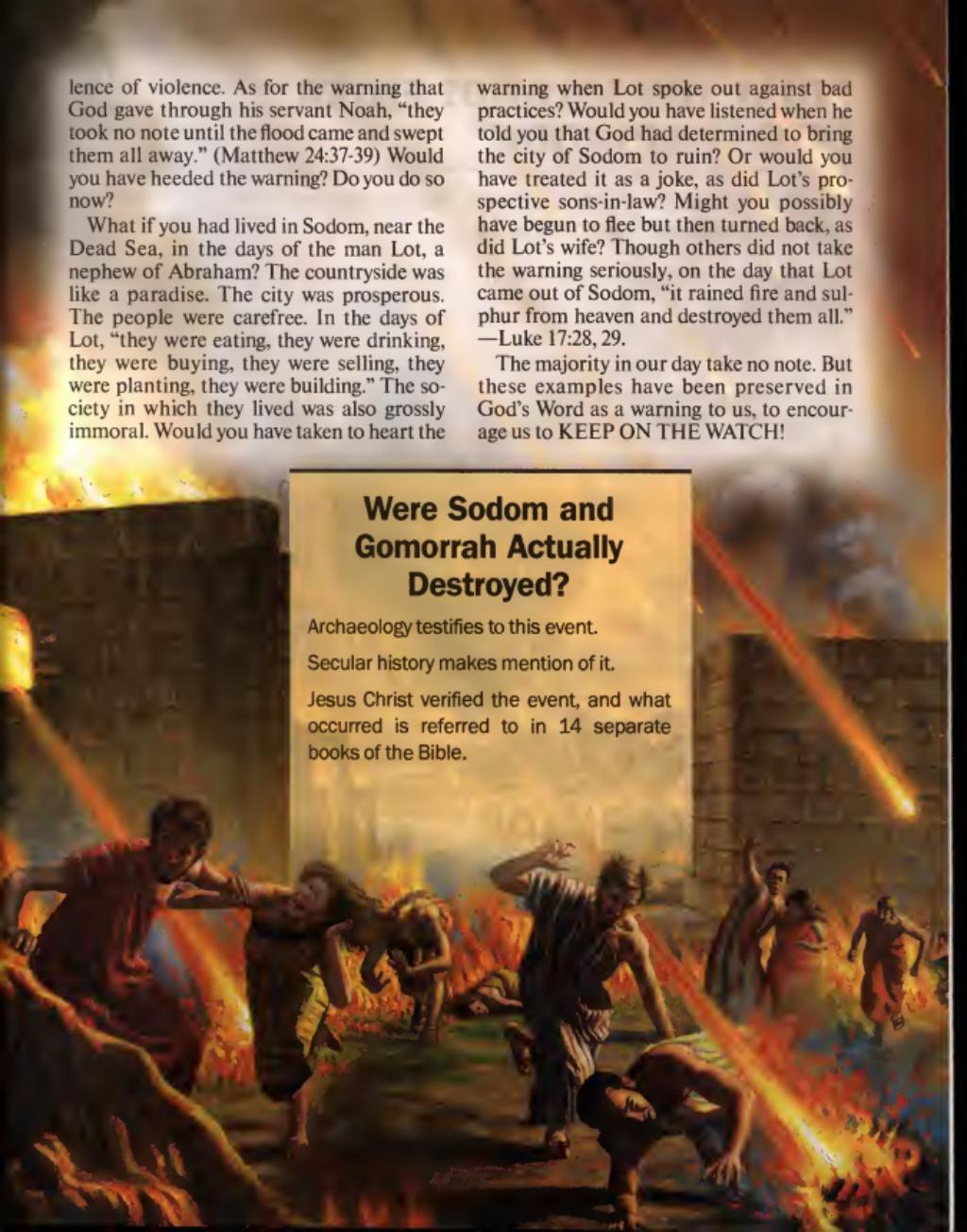
The Bible vividly described long in advance the events that mark the last days. In connection with that, it urges us to consider "the days of Noah." "In those days before the flood," people were busy with the customary activities of life, though they were no doubt concerned about the preva-

Was There Really a Global Flood?

Many critics say No. But the Bible says Yes.

Jesus Christ himself spoke of it, and he was alive when it occurred, viewing it from the heavens.





lence of violence. As for the warning that God gave through his servant Noah, "they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." (Matthew 24:37-39) Would you have heeded the warning? Do you do so now?

What if you had lived in Sodom, near the Dead Sea, in the days of the man Lot, a nephew of Abraham? The countryside was like a paradise. The city was prosperous. The people were carefree. In the days of Lot, "they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building." The society in which they lived was also grossly immoral. Would you have taken to heart the

warning when Lot spoke out against bad practices? Would you have listened when he told you that God had determined to bring the city of Sodom to ruin? Or would you have treated it as a joke, as did Lot's prospective sons-in-law? Might you possibly have begun to flee but then turned back, as did Lot's wife? Though others did not take the warning seriously, on the day that Lot came out of Sodom, "it rained fire and sulphur from heaven and destroyed them all." —Luke 17:28, 29.

The majority in our day take no note. But these examples have been preserved in God's Word as a warning to us, to encourage us to KEEP ON THE WATCH!

Were Sodom and Gomorrah Actually Destroyed?

Archaeology testifies to this event.

Secular history makes mention of it.

Jesus Christ verified the event, and what occurred is referred to in 14 separate books of the Bible.

"THAT YOU MAY NOT ENTER INTO TEMPTATION"

"Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation."—MATTHEW 26:41.

THE pressure was intense—unlike any he had experienced before. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was near the end of his earthly life. Jesus realized that soon he would be arrested, condemned to death, and impaled on a torture stake. He knew that his every decision and action would reflect on his Father's name. Jesus also knew that the future life prospects of mankind hung in the balance. Faced with all this pressure, what did he do?

² Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane with his disciples. It was a favorite spot with Jesus. There he withdrew a short distance from his disciples. When alone, he turned to his heavenly Father for strength, pouring out his heart in fervent prayer—not just once but three times. Though perfect, Jesus did not feel that he could face the pressure on his own.—Matthew 26:36-44.

³ Today, we too are under pressure. Earlier in this brochure, we considered evidence that we are living in the final days of this wicked system. The temptations and stresses of Satan's world are intensifying. The decisions and actions of any of us who profess to serve the true God reflect on his name and have a profound effect on our individual prospects for life in his new world. We love Jehovah. We want to 'endure to the



end'—the end of our life or the end of this system, whichever comes first. (Matthew 24:13) But how can we maintain our sense of urgency and keep on the watch?

⁴ Knowing that his disciples—both back then and today—would also be under pressure, Jesus urged: "Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation." (Matthew 26:41) What do those words mean for us today? What temptation do you face? And how can you "keep on the watch"?

Temptation to Do What?

⁵ All of us daily face the temptation to give in to "the snare of the Devil." (2 Timothy 2:26) The Bible warns us that Satan has especially targeted Jehovah's worshipers. (1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:12, 17) For what purpose? It is not necessarily to take our life. It is no victory for Satan if we die faithful to God. Satan is aware that Jehovah, in His due time, will undo death by means of the resurrection.—Luke 20:37, 38.

⁶ Satan wants to destroy something even more valuable than our present life—our integrity to God. Satan is desperate to prove that he can turn us away from Jehovah. Hence, if we can be induced to be unfaithful—to quit preaching the good news

or to abandon Christian standards—that would be a victory for Satan! (Ephesians 6:11-13) So “the Tempter” places before us temptations.—Matthew 4:3.

⁷ Satan’s “deceptive tactics” are varied. (Ephesians 6:11, *Jewish New Testament*) He may tempt us with materialism, fear, doubt, or pleasure-seeking. But one of his most effective methods involves discouragement. A sly opportunist, he knows that despondency can weaken us, making us vulnerable. (Proverbs 24:10) So especially when we “become crushed” emotionally, he tempts us to give up.—Psalm 38:8.

⁸ As we get deeper into the last days, it seems that causes for discouragement increase, and we are not immune to them. (See the box “Some Factors That Cause Discouragement.”) Whatever the cause, discouragement can sap our strength. “Buying out the opportune time” for spiritual obligations—including studying the Bible, attending Christian meetings, and sharing in the ministry—can be a challenge if you are exhausted physically, mentally, and emotionally. (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Remember that the Tempter wants you to quit. But this is no time to slow down or to lose your sense of urgency regarding the times in which we live! (Luke 21:34-36) How can you resist temptation and keep on the watch? Consider four suggestions that can help.

“Pray Continually”

⁹ *Rely on Jehovah through prayer.* Recall Jesus’ example in the garden of Gethsemane. Under intense emotional stress, what did he do? He turned to Jehovah for help, praying so fervently that “his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) Think about it. Jesus knew Satan well. Jesus had observed from heaven all the temptations that Satan uses in his efforts to ensnare God’s servants. Yet, Jesus did not feel that he could easily handle

whatever the Tempter might place before him. If the perfect Son of God felt the need to pray for divine help and strength, how much more so should we!—1 Peter 2:21.

¹⁰ Remember, too, that after urging his disciples to “pray continually,” Jesus said: “The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41) Whose flesh was Jesus referring to? Surely not his own; there was nothing weak in his perfect human flesh. (1 Peter 2:22) But it was different with his disciples. Because of inherited imperfection and sinful tendencies, they

Some Factors That Cause Discouragement

Health/age. If we suffer from a chronic illness or if advancing age imposes limitations, we may get depressed because we are not able to do more in serving God. —Hebrews 6:10.

Disappointment. We may become disheartened if we see little response to our efforts in preaching God’s Word.—Proverbs 13:12.

Feelings of worthlessness. Because of years of ill-treatment, a person may become convinced that he or she is unwanted, even by Jehovah.—1 John 3:19, 20.

Hurt feelings. If someone has been deeply offended by a fellow believer, he may get so distraught that he is tempted to stop attending Christian meetings or sharing in the field ministry.—Luke 17:1.

Persecution. Others who do not share your faith may oppose, persecute, or ridicule you.—2 Timothy 3:12; 2 Peter 3:3, 4.

would especially need help to resist temptation. (Romans 7:21-24) That is why he urged them—and all true Christians after them—to pray for help in facing temptation. (Matthew 6:13) Jehovah answers such prayers. (Psalm 65:2) How? In at least two ways.

¹¹ First, God helps us to recognize temptations. Satan's temptations are like snares strewn across a dark path. If you do not see them, you may be entrapped. By means of the Bible and Bible-based publications, Jehovah throws light on Satan's snares, thus enabling us to avoid giving into temptation. Over the years, printed literature and convention and assembly programs have repeatedly alerted us to such dangers as fear of man, sexual immorality, materialism, and other satanic temptations. (Proverbs 29:25; 1 Corinthians 10:8-11; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Are you not grateful to Jehovah for alerting us to Satan's designs? (2 Corinthians 2:11) All such warnings are an answer to your prayers for help in resisting temptation.

¹² Second, Jehovah answers our prayers by giving us the strength to endure temptation. His Word says: "God . . . will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out." (1 Corinthians 10:13) God will never allow a temptation to become so overwhelming that we would lack the spiritual strength to resist—if we continue to rely upon him. How does he "make the way out" for us? He 'gives holy spirit to those asking him.' (Luke 11:13) That spirit may help us to recall Bible principles that can reinforce our resolve to do what is right and help us to make wise deci-

sions. (John 14:26; James 1:5, 6) It can help us to display the very qualities we need in order to conquer wrong tendencies. (Galatians 5:22, 23) God's spirit may even move fellow believers to 'become a strengthening aid to us.' (Colossians 4:11) Are you not thankful that Jehovah responds in such loving ways to your prayers for help?

Be Realistic in Your Expectations

¹³ To keep on the watch, *we need to be realistic in our expectations*. Because of the pressures of life, we all grow weary at times. But we must remember that God never promised that we would have a problem-free life in this old system. Even in Bible times, God's servants faced adversities, including persecution, poverty, depression, and sickness.—Acts 8:1; 2 Corinthians 8:1, 2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:23.

¹⁴ Today, we too have our share of problems. We may face persecution, experience financial anxieties, struggle with depression, get sick, and suffer in other ways. If Jehovah were to protect us miraculously from all harm, would that not provide a basis for Satan to taunt Jehovah? (Proverbs 27:11) Jehovah does allow his servants to be tempted and tested, in some cases even to the point of premature death at the hands of opposers.—John 16:2.

¹⁵ What, then, has Jehovah promised? As we have previously noted, he has promised that he will make us equal to any temptation we may encounter, provided that we fully trust in him. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Through his Word, his spirit, and his organization, he protects us spiritually, helping us to safeguard our relationship with him. With that relationship intact, even if we die, we win. Nothing—not even death—can prevent God

Jesus urged us to "pray continually" for help in fighting temptation



from rewarding his faithful servants. (Hebrews 11:6) And in the new world now near at hand, Jehovah will not fail to fulfill all the rest of his marvelous promises of blessings for those who love him.—Psalm 145:16.

Remember the Issues

¹⁶ To endure to the end, we must remember the vital issues involved in God's permission of wickedness. If at times our own problems seem overwhelming and we are tempted to quit, we do well to remind ourselves that Satan has challenged the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty. The Deceiver has also questioned the devotion and integrity of God's worshipers. (Job 1:8-11; 2:3, 4) Those issues and the way that Jehovah has chosen to resolve them are bigger than any of us as individuals. How so?

¹⁷ God's temporary permission of hardship has allowed time for others to embrace the truth. Think about this: Jesus suffered so that we might have life. (John 3:16) Are we not grateful for that? But are we willing to put up with hardship for a little while longer so that still others might gain life? To endure to the end, we must recognize that Jehovah's wisdom is far greater than ours. (Isaiah 55:9) He will end wickedness at the time that is best for the settling of the issues forever and for our own eternal good. Really, how could it be otherwise? There is no injustice with God!—Romans 9:14-24.

"Draw Close to God"

¹⁸ To maintain our sense of urgency, we need to stay close to Jehovah. Never forget that Satan is doing all in his power to destroy our good relationship with Jehovah. Satan would have us believe that the end will never come and that there is no point in preaching the good news or living by Bible standards. But he "is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) We must be

determined to "oppose the Devil." Our relationship with Jehovah is something that we should never take for granted. The Bible lovingly urges us: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." (James 4:7, 8) How can you draw closer to Jehovah?

¹⁹ Prayerful meditation is vital. When life's pressures seem overwhelming, pour out your heart to Jehovah. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to see his answer to your requests. The answer may not always be exactly what you had in mind, but if your desire is to honor him and to maintain integrity, he will provide the help you need so that you can endure successfully. (1 John 5:14) As you see his direction in your life, you will draw closer to him. Reading about and reflecting on Jehovah's qualities and ways, as revealed in the Bible, are also essential. Such meditation helps you to know him better; it stirs your heart and deepens your love for him. (Psalm 19:14) And that love, more than anything else, will help you to resist temptation and keep on the watch.—1 John 5:3.

²⁰ To keep close to Jehovah, it is also important that we stay close to our fellow believers. This will be discussed in the final section of this brochure.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- What did Jesus do when under extreme pressure near the end of his life, and what did he urge his disciples to do? (Pars. 1-4)
- Why has Satan targeted Jehovah's worshipers, and in what ways does he tempt us? (Pars. 5-8)
- To resist temptation, why must we pray continually (Pars. 9-12), be realistic in our expectations (Pars. 13-15), remember the issues (Pars. 16-17), and "draw close to God" (Pars. 18-20)?

“ABOVE ALL THINGS, HAVE INTENSE LOVE”

“The end of all things has drawn close. . . . Above all things, have intense love for one another.”—1 PETER 4:7, 8.

JESUS knew that his last few hours with his apostles were precious. He was aware of what lay ahead of them. They had a great work to accomplish, but they would be hated and persecuted, even as he was. (John 15:18-20) More than once on that final night together, he reminded them of the need to “love one another.”—John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 13, 17.

² The apostle Peter, who was present that night, got the point. Years later, writing shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, Peter emphasized the importance of love. He counseled Christians: “The end of all things has drawn close. . . . Above all things, have intense love for one another.” (1 Peter 4:7, 8) Peter’s words are rich in meaning for those living during “the last days” of this present system of things. (2 Timothy 3:1) What is “intense love”? Why is it important that we have such love for others? And how can we demonstrate that we do?

“Intense Love”—What Is It?

³ Many think of love as a feeling that must spring forth naturally. But Peter was not talking about just any kind of love; he was speaking about love in its noblest form. The word “love” at 1 Peter 4:8 is a translation of the Greek word *agape*. That term denotes unselfish love that is guided, or governed, by principle. One reference work

says: “Agape love is capable of being commanded because it is not primarily an emotion but a decision of the will leading to action.” Because we have an inherited tendency toward selfishness, we need reminders to show love to one another, doing so in ways that godly principles direct. —Genesis 8:21; Romans 5:12.

⁴ This is not to say that we are to love one another merely out of a sense of duty. *Aga-pe* is not devoid of warmth and feeling. Peter said we must “have intense [literally, “out-stretching”] love for one another.”* (*Kingdom Interlinear*) Still,

such love requires effort. Regarding the Greek word rendered “intense,” one scholar says: “It portrays the image of an athlete’s straining muscles as the last bit of strength is willed forth at the finish of a race.”

⁵ Our love, then, must not be limited to doing only what comes easily or be restricted to a select few. Christian love requires “stretching” our heart, extending love even when it may be challenging to do so. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13) Clearly, this kind of love is something we need to cultivate and work at, just as an athlete must train and work to hone his skills. It is vital that we have such love for one another. Why? For at least three reasons.

* At 1 Peter 4:8, other Bible translations say we must love one another “sincerely,” “deeply,” or “earnestly.”



Why Should We Love One Another?

⁶ First, "because love is from God." (1 John 4:7) Jehovah, the Source of this endearing quality, loved us first. The apostle John says: "By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him." (1 John 4:9) God's Son was "sent forth" by becoming a human, carrying out his ministry, and dying on a torture stake—all so "that we might gain life." How should we respond to this supreme expression of God's love? John says: "If this is how God loved us, then we are ourselves under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4:11) Note that John writes, "If this is how God loved *us*"—not just *you* but *us*. The point is clear: If God loves our fellow worshipers, then we ought to love them too.

⁷ Second, it is especially vital that we love one another more now in order to extend help to our brothers in need because "the end of all things has drawn close." (1 Peter 4:7) We are living in "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) World conditions, natural disasters, and opposition bring hardships upon us. Under trying circumstances, we need to draw ever closer to one another. Intense love will bind us together and motivate us to "care for one another."—1 Corinthians 12:25, 26.

⁸ Third, we need to love one another because we do not want to "allow place for the Devil" to take advantage of us. (Ephesians 4:27) Satan is quick to use the imperfections of fellow believers—their weaknesses, faults, and mistakes—as stumbling blocks. Will a thoughtless remark or an unkind act cause us to withdraw from the congregation? (Proverbs 12:18) Not if we have intense love for one another! Such love



A close-knit family is better prepared to withstand the pressures of these last days

helps us to maintain peace and unitedly to serve God "shoulder to shoulder."—Zephaniah 3:9.

How to Demonstrate That You Love Others

⁹ *Showing love must begin at home.* Jesus said that his genuine followers would be identified by the love they have for one another. (John 13:34, 35) Love must be evident not just in the congregation but also in the family—between marriage mates and between parents and children. It is not enough to *feel* love for family members; we need to *express* it in positive ways.

¹⁰ How can marriage mates show love for each other? A husband who genuinely loves his wife lets her know by his words and deeds—in public and in private—that he cherishes her. He respects her personal dignity and is considerate of her thoughts, viewpoints, and feelings. (1 Peter 3:7) He puts her welfare ahead of his own, and he does all that he can to care for her material, spiritual, and emotional needs. (Ephesians 5:25, 28) A wife who truly loves her husband accords him "deep respect," even if he at times does not meet her expectations. (Ephesians 5:22, 33) She is supportive of her mate and submissive to him, not making unreasonable demands, but cooperating with him in keeping the focus on spiritual matters.—Genesis 2:18; Matthew 6:33.

¹¹ Parents, how can you show love for your children? Your willingness to work hard to provide materially for them is evidence of your love. (1 Timothy 5:8) But children need more than food, clothing, and shelter. If they are to grow up to love and serve the true God, they need spiritual training. (Proverbs 22:6) That means making time as a family to study the Bible, share in the ministry, and attend Christian meetings. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7) Being consistent in such activities requires considerable sacrifice, especially in these critical times. Your concern and your efforts to care for your children's spiritual needs are an expression of love, for you thereby show that you have their eternal welfare at heart.

—John 17:3.

¹² It is vital that parents also show love by caring for their children's emotional needs. Children are vulnerable; their tender hearts need reassurance of your love. Tell them you love them, and give them lots of affection, for such expressions assure them that they are lovable and have worth. Give them warm and genuine commendation, for it lets them know that you see and value their efforts. Discipline them with love, for such correction tells them that you care about the kind of person they are becoming. (Ephesians 6:4) All such wholesome expressions of love help to build a happy, close-knit family that is better prepared to resist the pressures of these last days.

¹³ *Love moves us to overlook the shortcomings of others.* Recall that when admonishing his readers to "have intense love for one another," Peter gave the reason why this is so important: "Because love covers a multi-

tude of sins." (1 Peter 4:8) To 'cover' sins does not mean to 'cover up' serious sins. Such matters are rightly reported to and handled by responsible ones in the congregation. (Leviticus 5:1; Proverbs 29:24) It would be most unloving—and unscriptural—to allow gross sinners to continue hurting or victimizing innocent ones.—1 Corinthians 5:9-13.

¹⁴ In most cases, the mistakes and faults of fellow believers are minor in nature. We all stumble in word or deed at times, disappointing or even hurting one another. (James 3:2) Should we be quick to publicize the shortcomings of others? Such a course would only serve to create friction in the congregation. (Ephesians 4:1-3) If we are governed by love, we will not "give away a fault" of a fellow worshiper. (Psalm 50:20) Just as plaster and paint cover the imperfections of a wall, so love covers the imperfections of others.—Proverbs 17:9.

¹⁵ *Love will cause us to come to the aid of those who are in real need.* As conditions in the last days continue to deteriorate, there may be times when our fellow believers need material or physical help. (1 John 3:17, 18) For example, has a member of our congregation suffered a severe financial reversal or the loss of a job? Then perhaps we can offer some material assistance, as our circumstances allow. (Proverbs 3:27, 28; James 2:14-17) Is the home of an elderly widow in need of repair? Then perhaps we can take appropriate initiative to help with some of the work.

—James 1:27.

¹⁶ Our showing love to others is not limited to those who may live in our vicinity. At times, we may hear reports about God's servants in other lands who have been victims of

Love moves us to come to the aid of those who are in real need



**Sharing the good news of God's Kingdom
with others is an act of love**

severe storms, earthquakes, or civil unrest. They may be in desperate need of food, clothing, and other items. It does not matter if they are of another race or ethnic group. We "have love for the whole association of brothers." (1 Peter 2:17) So, like first-century congregations, we are eager to support relief efforts that have been organized to provide help. (Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:26) When we show love in all such ways, we strengthen the bond that unites us in these last days.—Colossians 3:14.

17 Love moves us to share the good news of God's Kingdom with others. Consider the example of Jesus. Why did he preach and teach? He was "moved with pity" for the crowds because of their poor spiritual condition. (Mark 6:34) They were neglected and misled by the false religious shepherds, who should have taught them spiritual truths and given them hope. So, motivated by deep, heartfelt love and compassion, Jesus comforted the people with "the good news of the kingdom of God."—Luke 4:16-21, 43.

18 Today, too, many people have been spiritually neglected and misled and are without hope. If, like Jesus, we sharpen our sensitivity to the spiritual needs of those who do not yet know the true God, then we will be moved by love and compassion to share with them the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 6:9, 10; 24:14) In view of the short time remaining, it has never been more urgent to preach this lifesaving message.—1 Timothy 4:16.

"The End of All Things Has Drawn Close"

19 Remember, Peter prefaced his counsel to have love for one another with the words: "The end of all things has drawn close." (1 Peter 4:7) Soon this wicked world will



give way to God's righteous new world. (2 Peter 3:13) Today, then, is no time to be complacent. Jesus warned us: "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare."—Luke 21:34, 35.

20 By all means, then, let us "keep on the watch," being alert to where we are in the stream of time. (Matthew 24:42) Let us be on guard against any of Satan's temptations that could distract us. Let us never allow this cold, loveless world to prevent us from demonstrating our love for others. Above all, let us draw ever closer to the true God, Jehovah, whose Messianic Kingdom will soon fulfill his glorious purpose toward this earth.—Revelation 21:4, 5.

STUDY QUESTIONS

- What parting counsel did Jesus have for his disciples, and what shows that Peter got the point? (Pars. 1-2)
- What is "intense love"? (Pars. 3-5)
- Why should we love one another? (Pars. 6-8)
- How can you demonstrate that you love others? (Pars. 9-18)
- Why is this no time to be complacent, and what should we be determined to do? (Pars. 19-20)

Help to Understand the Bible

The Bible contains vital information for you.

- It explains what the Creator says about the purpose of life.
- It offers the finest counsel on how to cope successfully with the problems of life now.
- It shows what is needed in order to be approved when we all stand before the judgment seat of God.

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